



West Virginia Natural Resources Conservation Service Volunteer Mentoring Program Guidelines 2006

Mission

The mission of the West Virginia Mentoring Program is to encourage employee self-development through enhanced performance, increased job satisfaction, and potential career advancement. To be effective both the mentor and protégé must make a commitment towards fostering their career relationship by exchange of information and work experiences.

Terms and Definitions

Mentoring. A process which links an experienced person to a person with less experience for the purpose of creating opportunities for professional growth.

Mentor. A mentor is an experienced professional who fosters the career development and professional growth of the protégé, who is not in a supervisory capacity to the protégé.

Protégé. An individual whose career development and professional growth is fostered by the mentor.

Objectives

The WV Mentoring Program seeks to create opportunities to promote support of diversity through sensitivity to cultural and gender differences, which helps promote a productive workforce. Bob Procter, a noted speaker, said, “A mentor is someone who sees more talent and ability within you, than you see in yourself, and helps bring it out of you.” The WV Mentoring Program may:

- ❖ Provide career enhancement through increased self-awareness, improved
- ❖ Communication and interpersonal skills.
- ❖ Broadened understanding of agency activities.
- ❖ Enhance leadership and decision making skills.
- ❖ Provide a forum to exchange ideas, understanding, and appreciation for different organizational
- ❖ Sections and disciplines within the agency.
- ❖ Improve morale, motivation, job performance and job satisfaction.

Program Overview

The success of any mentoring program is dependent on support by management, the commitment of the mentor, and the receptivity by the protégé. All newly appointed employees to NRCS will be assigned a mentor for a period of one year. All current employees may request a mentor after filling out an application and becoming a protégé. Mentors will be selected from a pool of volunteers that have submitted an application to the Human Resources Division and completed mentoring training. All employees will be made of aware of the program at area and/or statewide meetings and dissemination of informational material. Mentors that have volunteered to serve will attend a training session to improve understanding of the program, expectations, responsibilities and roles, and tools available.

Roles and Responsibilities

Management. Agency management must support a mentoring program by providing an atmosphere that is conducive to the mentoring process. Adequate time must be allowed for mentor/protégé contact in addition to adequate preparation and support of the mentor prior to and during the process. Management will:

- Identify and recruit potential mentors.
- Provide adequate program training for mentors.
- Make sure the program is well publicized, especially to new employees.
- Attempt to bring mentors and protégés together that will benefit from the experience.
- Be responsive to questions and potential concerns of the protégé's work unit supervisor.

Mentor. It is imperative that the mentor makes a commitment to serve for one year to three years. Although this assignment is strictly voluntary, once it is accepted, it should be considered an important duty. The mentor, outlining time spent and other general information to evaluate the overall program effectiveness, will submit an annual report. The mentor must agree to meet face to face with the protégé at least once a quarter, interact by phone, and e-mail at least a monthly as minimum. The role of a mentor includes:

- Serving as an advisor by listening, guiding, and providing nonjudgmental feedback.
- Providing encouragement and guidance on training and development issues, as well as support on a personal level.
- Referring the protégé their supervisor, EO Counselor, Civil Rights Coordinator, Employee Assistance Program, or Human Resources department, as appropriate, when other counseling is needed.
- Being sensitive to protégé workload.
- Serving as a role model on how to conduct oneself in the professional world.
- Recognizing and validating signs of protégé professional growth and development.
- Being flexible and recognizing that mentoring relationships go through stages and changes over time.
- Encouraging and conveying a sincere belief in the protégé's ability to succeed.
- Helping the protégé network with individuals within NRCS, other agencies, and organizations.
- Providing suggestions for the protégé to demonstrate their skills.
- Recognizing that mentoring relationships can be short-term or long-lasting.
- Maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

Protégé. A successful mentoring relationship can provide substantial benefits for professional growth for the protégé but it requires a commitment to by the protégé to help make it succeed. A protégé should submit an application to the Human Resources Division for an assigned Mentor and understand that a commitment to the program of no less than one year will be expected. The protégé will fill out a questionnaire annually to help evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The role of a protégé includes:

- Developing a mutually approved agreement on mentor/protégé expectations.
- Identifying and assigning priorities for needs and mentoring expectations.
- Evaluating their own skills and the ones they may desire by doing a self-assessment.
- Identifying goals that are realistic and challenging and by developing action steps towards reaching those goals.
- Being open and receptive to guidance, suggestions, following through with agreed upon training, activities, initiatives, and program enhancement.
- Being honest and forthright with the mentor.
- Keeping the mentor informed of changes in needs, expectations, or career goals.
- Asking questions assuring a clear understanding is reached.
- Accepting the reality that needs and expectations change as one grows.
- Blending mentoring with other training approaches or methods.

- Recognizing that the mentoring program can only a supplement their own hard work and abilities.
- Accepting decision-making responsibilities and the consequences of these decisions.



West Virginia Natural Resources Conservation Service Volunteer Mentor Application

Name _____ Phone Number _____

E-Mail Address _____ Fax Number _____

Job Title _____ Series/Grade _____

Office Location _____ Years in Service _____

Supervisor Name _____ Supervisor Location _____

Please comment, attach additional sheets as necessary and submit to the Human Resources Manager.

1. Describe any special knowledge, skills, and experience you are willing to share (i.e., public speaking, networking, Toolkit/CADD, planning procedures experience, computer expertise, organizational skills, volunteer experience, etc.).
2. Summarize your educational and career background.
3. Do you prefer a particular category of protégé that would be best suited for you to assist (i.e. student trainee, new employee (less than 3 years), permanent/transferring employee, employee within 10 years of retirement, etc.), other.
4. How much time can you commit to the mentoring program? _____hrs./month; _____quarterly
5. Why would you like to be considered as a mentor volunteer?
6. Rank in order (4 being highest) 4,3,2,1 what you can offer the protégé.
 - ___Can provide or assist with opportunity for professional development.
 - ___Has a strong knowledge of NRCS Organization, and references
 - ___Advice and counseling
 - ___Opportunity for networking
 - Other, please specify _____
7. If selected, I will need the following reasonable accommodations due to my disability or my special needs: _____
8. Rank your proficiency in the following skill categories table at the end of this questionnaire.
9. I agree to actively participate in the volunteer mentor program as a mentor for one to three years and attend all required training.

Signature

Date

Mentor Skill Categories

Name _____

PEOPLE SKILLS	STRONG	AVERAGE
Communications		
Leadership		
Conflict Management		
Interpersonal Skills		
Problem Solving		
Team Building		
Decision Making		
Human Resources		
Creative Thinking		
Planning and Evaluation		
TECHNICAL SKILLS	STRONG	AVERAGE
Soils		
Engineering		
Biology/Wetlands		
Forestry/Range		
Administrative		
Computer		



West Virginia Natural Resources Conservation Service Volunteer Protégé Application

Name_____ Phone Number_____

E-Mail Address_____ Fax Number_____

Job Title _____ Series/Grade_____

Office Location_____ Years in Service_____

Supervisor Name_____ Supervisor Location_____

Please comment, attach additional sheets as necessary and submit to the Human Resources Manager.

1. Summarize your work experience.
2. Summarize your educational/career background (degree, training, workshops, certificates, etc.).
3. Explain why you want to participate in the program?
4. What are your career/training goals?
 - Short Term:
 - Long Term:
5. What do you hope to accomplish as a result of the mentoring relationship?
6. **Optional:** Would you like to name request your mentor? Please provide information.
7. How much time can you commit to the mentoring program? ____ hours a month; ____ a quarter.
8. Rank in order (4 being highest) 4,3,2,1 what skills you would most appreciate in a mentor.
 - __Can provide or assist with opportunity for professional development.
 - __Has a strong knowledge of NRCS Organization, and references
 - __Advice and counseling
 - __Opportunity for networking
 - Other, please specify_____
9. Rank your proficiency in the following skill categories table at the end of this questionnaire.
10. I agree to actively participate in the volunteer mentor program as a protégé for one to three years and attend all required training.

Signature

Date

Protégé Skill Categories

Name _____

PEOPLE SKILLS	STRONG	AVERAGE
Communications		
Leadership		
Conflict Management		
Interpersonal Skills		
Problem Solving		
Team Building		
Decision Making		
Human Resources		
Creative Thinking		
Planning and Evaluation		
TECHNICAL SKILLS	STRONG	AVERAGE
Soils		
Engineering		
Biology/Wetlands		
Forestry/Range		
Administrative		
Computer		